

PUBLIC SAFETY

Greenwood teacher gets 3 years in prison for child seduction



Jake Allen

Indianapolis Star

Published 5:12 p.m. ET Dec. 14, 2021 | Updated 1:27 p.m. ET April 28, 2023

Update: *Matthew Hockersmith was sentenced on April 27, 2023, to three years in the Indiana Department of Corrections followed by one year of probation after pleading guilty to three counts of child seduction, court records show.*

Original article: A Greenwood High School teacher and coach accused of having an inappropriate relationship with a student was charged with three counts of child seduction Dec. 14, 2021, according to the Johnson County Prosecutor's Office.

Matthew Hockersmith, 40, of Greenwood, was arrested in December 2021, according to a probable cause affidavit.

The parents of the student told a detective they were concerned about the relationship between Hockersmith and their daughter and agreed to let investigators download information from the girl's phone, according to the affidavit.

A detective discovered the student and teacher had exchanged text messages and Hockersmith asked the student to use a messaging app that was hidden or password-protected, according to police.

The detective discovered messages between Hockersmith and the student were sexual in nature, according to the affidavit.

In an interview with a detective, the student said she had developed a close relationship with Hockersmith, but things progressed too quickly, and she did not know how to handle the situation or end the communication, according to the affidavit. The student told investigators she was in one of Hockersmith's classes and was his teacher assistant.

The student told a detective she did not want to have a physical relationship with Hockersmith, according to the affidavit.

Hockersmith and the student told investigators about three instances of intercourse, according to the affidavit.

Hockersmith said inappropriate communication with the student — including photos and messages — began in September or October of this year, according to the affidavit.

Hockersmith posted bond and has been released from jail pending a court date, according to the Johnson County Prosecutor's Office.

The Greenwood Community School Corporation did not return a request for comment in regard to Hockersmith's employment. Hockersmith didn't have an attorney listed in court records Tuesday afternoon.

Contact Jake Allen at jake.allen@indystar.com. Follow him on Twitter @Jake_Allen19.

Supplement

Supplement number: 1

Name: Cottongim S

ARREST AFFIDAVIT FOR PROBABLE CAUSE

STATE OF INDIANA, COUNTY OF JOHNSON, SS;

Detective Scott Cottongim of the Greenwood Police Department swears or affirms that he believes and has good cause to believe that on December 13th, 2021, Matthew M Hockersmith, a adult male, DOB: 6/29/1981, SSN: [REDACTED] 9492, did commit the crime of (3) counts of Child Seduction.

In support of your affiant's assertion of Probable Cause your affiant bases his belief on the following attending facts and circumstances that:

On Tuesday, December 7, 2021, Detective Sergeant Aaron Hagist of the Greenwood Police Department received a phone call from Kurt Spivey requesting a meeting to discuss a potential inappropriate relationship between a student and a teacher at the Greenwood High School. On Wednesday, December 8th 2021 met and spoke with Kurt Spivey

Spivey stated on December 1, 2021, he met with students parents and interviewed them in regards to this situation. Both Brummett and Wise believed there is possible inappropriate digital and personal communication between Juvenile 1, a student at Greenwood Community High School, and Matthew Hockersmith, a teacher and coach at Greenwood Community High School.

On Wednesday, December 8, 2021, I contacted Juvenile 1's parents and spoke with them about this incident. Both parents were very cooperative and stated they were very concerned about the relationship between Juvenile 1 and Hockersmith. [REDACTED] requested and agreed to let us conduct a forensic examination on Juvenile 1's phone. Arrangements were made to meet with them as well as Juvenile 1 on Monday, December 13, 2021, to retrieve the phone. A consent to search was signed.

Detective Brian Swisher conducted a forensic examination of Juvenile 1's cell phone which includes extractions of SMS messages, photographs, and social media among others. Based on his examination, Detective Swisher explained that Juvenile 1 and Hockersmith were using SMS (text messaging) to send multiple messages to each other. However, on or about December 2, 2021, Swisher determined that Juvenile 1 and Hockersmith were using a phone app. This was evident by a message on this app from Hockersmith on December 2, 2021 at 8:46 AM local time stating, "Perfect....now hide the app or password protect it or something." Juvenile 1 acknowledges this message at 8:46 AM by responding, "Yes dear." Detective Swisher stated that upon reviewing various messages, Juvenile 1 and Hockersmith refer to each other as husband and wife.

Detective Swisher located multiple messages between Juvenile 1 and Hockersmith that were of a sexual nature. Below is a sample of some of these messages:
December 2, 2021 at 8:49 AM-Hockersmith: "I wanna fuck"
December 2, 2021 at 8:50 AM-Juvenile 1 responds: "Mmmmm me too"
December 2, 2021 at 8:50 AM-Hockersmith: "Like fr I want to have sex with my wife"
December 2, 2021 at 8:50 AM-Juvenile 1: "Like seriously...me too"

Officer Report for Incident G21L29526

Page 5 of 7

December 2, 2021 at 8:51 AM—Juvenile 1: "If you want me to be honest w you I really want another hug and to cuddle with you skin to skin again"

On December 13th, 2021 I contacted the mother of Juvenile 1, and asked if I could sit down and speak with her daughter about this incident. She agreed, and I met at the residence at 12:00pm on this date.

I informed Juvenile 1 that I was investigating a case of potential inappropriate behavior between her and a teacher at the Greenwood High School. I informed her that the teacher in question was Matthew Hockersmith. I told Juvenile 1 that the police department has already begun to conduct a forensic extraction of her cell phone, and we had already located some inappropriate text messages between her and Hockersmith. Juvenile 1 said that she knew Hockersmith from the high school and when this current school year started she was a TA (teachers assistant) in one of his classes.

Juvenile 1 said that she and Hockersmith had developed a relationship. She said that things started during this current school year. She said that it started with just flirting with each other, and then things just got too serious too quick. Juvenile 1 said that things just continued to progress in this relationship until the point she didn't know what to do, or how to get out of it.

I asked Juvenile 1 if the relationship between her and Hockersmith had gotten physical at anytime. She said that it had gotten physical, even to the point where she and Hockersmith had sexual intercourse on three separate occasions. Juvenile one said that she remembers that the sex happened twice in Hockersmith's personal mini van, and another time at Hockersmith's residence. I asked if the sexual encounters were consensual between her and Hockersmith. She said that internally she didn't want to, but she told Hockersmith yes when they had sex.

I then told Juvenile 1 that there were naked photos on her phone that were located during the forensic extraction. I asked Juvenile 1 if she had ever sent Hockersmith any naked photos of herself. She said that she had sent him naked photos of herself, and she is guessing that this happened about 20 times. She said that she sent him naked pictures of herself when Hockersmith asked for them. I then asked if Hockersmith had ever sent her naked photos to her phone. She said that Hockersmith had sent her naked photos of himself approximately 5 times. She said that these photos included pictures of his penis. She said that she believes that all of these photos were probably deleted from her devices.

Juvenile 1 said that Hockersmith would always remind her to delete the information that was on her phone between them. She felt that he was starting to get paranoid about the entire relationship.

I then asked Juvenile 1 if any thing physical between her and Hockersmith ever happened at the school because they were with each other during the school day. She said that Hockersmith had asked her to skip periods before, but she never skipped a period in school, because she didn't want to get in trouble. Juvenile 1 then told me that she and Hockersmith would meet in the LGI room of the school between some of the passing periods. She said that LGI room was an oversized classroom for large classes. Juvenile 1 said that they would meet during the passing period between 4th and 5th period, and then again during periods. She said that there was nobody else in the classroom when they met, and that Hockersmith would just leave the door cracked for her to enter. I then asked

Officer Report for Incident G21L29526

Page 6 of 7

what would have happened when they met in this classroom during the passing periods. She said that mostly they would just make out, but nothing sexual ever happened.

I then asked her how often they would meet in this classroom and she said that they did this every day, and had been doing so for sometime. Juvenile 1 said that all of the physical activity started between her and Hockersmith sometime in October, 2021.

At approximately 2:30pm on December 13th, 2021 Greenwood detectives went to Greenwood High School and Matthew Hockersmith was placed under arrest. He was then transported back to the Greenwood Police Department. Hockersmith was taken to an interview room at the police department and he was advised of his rights. Hockersmith signed the form, said that he understood his rights, and said that he would talk to me about the incident.

While verifying Hockersmith's personal information he confirmed his cell number.

This is the same phone number that Juvenile 1 used to communicate with Hockersmith. I then told Hockersmith that we were conducting an investigation in reference to an inappropriate relationship between him and a juvenile student at the Greenwood High School. I told Hockersmith that I had already spoken with the Juvenile involved about this incident.

Hockersmith said that he was the teacher for Juvenile 1 during the last school year. He also said that Juvenile 1 was a TA (teachers assistant) for him in one of his classes this current school year.

Hockersmith said the inappropriate communication probably started in September or October of 2021. He said that things started getting worse when emotions got involved. He said that he felt that the emotions were consensual between him and Juvenile 1.

I told Hockersmith that I had already spoken with Juvenile 1 about the case and she told me that things did turn physical between her and Hockersmith. Hockersmith said that things just started out with hugging each other, then just progressed further and further. He said that things just got out of hand. I told Hockersmith that Juvenile 1 informed me that things escalated to the point that they even had sexual intercourse on three separate occasions. Hockersmith agreed with this statement, and admitted to having sexual intercourse with Juvenile 1 on three separate occasions. He said that this happened outside of the Greenwood High School. He said that he remembers them having sex once in his vehicle, and twice at his residence.

I then informed Hockersmith that we had located pictures on the phone of Juvenile 1 that involved nudity. I informed him that Juvenile told me that pictures involving nudity were sent back and forth to each other. He said that they had both asked each other for nude pictures of each other. He said that he was initially cautious about this because of him knowing it was wrong. He said that he remembers Juvenile 1 asking for a nude picture of him first, but he eventually asked Juvenile 1 for nude pictures of her. He did state that it was probably accurate that she sent him about 20 different nude pictures, and he sent her about 5 different nude pictures of him.

Hockersmith said that during this time he did feel guilt about what was going on. I asked Hockersmith if he ever felt that this was wrong about this happening between a teacher and a student. He said that he absolutely felt that this was wrong, but he takes responsibility about everything that happened. He admitted that he truly cared about Juvenile 1. When I asked Hockersmith about what his end goal with this relationship he just responded he dreamed about

Officer Report for Incident G21L29526

Page 7 of 7

different things, but didn't go into specifics.

I then told Hockersmith that Juvenile 1 had informed about them meeting between class periods during the school day. He did admit that they would meet between periods in the LGI (Large Group Instruction) room. He said that they would just catch up with each other about how the day was going. I told him that Juvenile 1 said that they would make out sometimes when they met in this classroom. Hockersmith said that they would sometimes kiss and stuff when they would be meeting, but nothing was ever sexual.

At this time Matthew Hockersmith was transported to the Johnson County Jail on 3 counts of Child Seduction.

This affidavit does not set forth each process used to examine the evidence, child abuse/exploitation artifact found or fact I have learned during this investigation, but rather is provided solely for the purpose of establishing probable cause in support of the complainant in this matter.

All these events occurred in Johnson County, Indiana.

I swear, under penalty of perjury, as specified by IC 35-44-2-1, that the foregoing representations are true. (IC 35-34-1-2.4).

Signed: /s/Scott A Cottongim

Printed: Scott A Cottongim

Reviewed by:

Probable cause found.

/s/ Ryan Bland
Ryan Bland, #27740-49
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney
8th Judicial Circuit Court

Judge of _____
Court of Johnson County